

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 125183

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PEPR, LY, US

SUBJECT: LIBYAN CHARGE'S VIEWS ON BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. AT RECEPTION MAY 15 NEW LIBYAN CHARGE AL MADFA'I SPOKE WITH DEPTOFF AT LENGTH REGARDING HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT AND INTENTIONS. EXPLAINING HE HAD BEEN VERY PROSPEROUS AND CONTENT AS A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN, AL MADFA'I SAID ONLY HIS SENSE OF DUTY AND DESIRE TO IMPROVE LIBYAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS HAD LED HIM TO ACCEPT QADHAFI'S REQUEST THAT HE SERVE AS CHARGE IN WASHINGTON. QADHAFI TOLD HIM HE HAD BEEN PICKED FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT BECAUSE HE WAS BELIEVED TO KNOW AMERICA AND AMERICANS (AL MADFA'I ATTENDED TWO COURSES FOR A TOTAL OF SEVEN MONTHS AT FORT MONMOUTH, NEW JERSEY, WHILE A SIGNALS CORPS OFFICER IN THE EARLY SIXTIES).

2. REPEATEDLY PROFESSING HIS DESIRE FOR IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS, AL MADFA'I ASSURED DEPTOFF THERE ARE MANY LIBYANS VERY SYMPATHETIC TO THE U.S., BUT GIVEN PRES-
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ENT STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND TRIPOLI THEY FEAR TO EXPRESS PUBLICLY THEIR PRO-AMERICAN SENTIMENT. AS A RESULT, ANTI-AMERICAN AND EVEN PRO-SOVIET VIEWS ARE THE ONES QADHAFI HEARS FROM HIS COUNSELORS. AS STAUNCH MUSLIMS, LIBYANS ARE ANTI-SOVIET, BUT DIFFERENCES WITH U.S. GOVERNMENT MAKE LIBYANS DEPENDENT ON SOVIETS.

3. DISCUSSING HIS PLANS, AL MADFA'I SAID HE HOPES TO CONCENTRATE ON AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND EXPAND ON THESE IN WORKING TOWARD AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS. HE ALSO EXPRESSED THE DESIRE TO EXPLORE DISPASSIONATELY AREAS OF DISCORD, E.G., TERRORISM, IN AN EFFORT TO IDENTIFY DIFFERENCES AND WORK, WHERE POSSIBLE, TOWARD THEIR RESOLUTION.

4. COMMENT: WHILE MUCH OF AL MADFA'T'S PRESENTATION IS REMINISCENT OF STATEMENTS BY OTHER LIBYAN OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON AND TRIPOLI, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT PROFESSION OF GOODWILL PERSISTS DESPITE RECENT EXPANSION OF U.S. SANCTIONS. AL MADFA'I APPEARS GENUINELY DESIRE IMPROVE RELATIONS, AND HE HAS BEEN ASSURED THAT DEPARTMENT FULLY SHARES HIS INTERESTS IN DISCUSSING DIFFERENCES AND EXPANDING ON AREAS OF AGREEMENT. VANCE

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